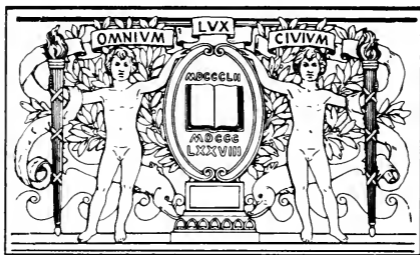


LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER





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LITTLE HENRY.



LITTLE HENRY

AND

HIS BEARER BOOSY

BY

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LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER.

HENRY L.— was born at Dinapore in the East Indies. His papa was an officer in the Company's service, and was killed in attacking a mud fort belonging to a petty Rajah, a few months after the birth of his son. His mamma also died before he was a year old. Thus little Henry was left an orphan when he was a very little baby ; but his dying mother, when taking her last farewell of him, lifted up her eyes to heaven, and said, " O God, I leave my fatherless child with thee, claiming thy promise in all humility, yet in full confidence that my baby will never be left destitute ; for in thee the fatherless find mercy." The promise to which she alluded is to be found in Jer. xlix. 11 :—" Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive ; and let thy widows trust in me."

As soon as Henry's mamma was dead, a lady, who lived at that time in a large *puckah** house near the river between Patna and Dinapore, came and took little Henry, and gave him a room in her house, giving strict orders to her servants to provide him with everything that he wanted. But as she was one of those fine ladies who will give their money (when they have any to spare) for the relief of distress, but have no idea how it is possible for any one to bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and yet want charity; she thought that when she had received the child, and given her orders to her servants, she had done all that was necessary for him. She would not afterwards suffer Henry to give her the least trouble, nor would she endure the smallest inconvenience on his account: and thus the poor child, being very small, and unable to make known his wants, might have been cruelly neglected had it not been for the attention of a *bearer*,† who had lived many years with his papa, and had taken care of Henry from the day that he was born.

When he was a very little baby, Boosy (for that was the bearer's name) attended him night and day, warmed his pap, rocked his cot, dressed and undressed and washed him,

* The meaning of *puckah* is ripe, or strong; it here means brick or stone.

† A servant, whose work is to carry a palanquin; but who is frequently employed to take care of children.

and did everything for him as tenderly as if he had been his own child. The first word that little Henry tried to say was Boosy; and when he was only ten months old he used to put his arms round his neck, and kiss him, or stroke his swarthy cheek with his little delicate hand.

When Henry was carried to the lady's house, Boosy went with him: and for some years the little child had no other friend than his bearer. Boosy never left his *choota sahib*,* except for two hours in the twenty-four, when he went to get his *khauna*.† At night he slept on his mat at the foot of the child's cot; and whenever Henry called he was up in a moment, and had milk or toast-and-water ready to give him to drink. Early in the morning, before sunrise, he took him out in a little carriage which was provided for him, or carried him in his arms round the garden. When he brought him in, he bathed him and dressed him, and gave him his breakfast, and put him in his cot to sleep: and all the day long he played with him; sometimes carrying him in his arms or on his back, and sometimes letting him walk, or roll upon the carpet. Everybody who came to the house noticed the kindness of Boosy to the child, and he got *buckshish*‡ from many people for his goodness to Henry.

When Henry was two years old, he had a

* Little master.

† Food.

‡ A present.

dreadful illness: so alarming indeed was it, that for many days it was thought he would die. He had afterwards a very severe illness when he was four years old, for he was never a very healthy child. During the height of these sicknesses, his bearer never left him; nor would he take any rest, even by the side of his bed, till he thought the danger was over.

These things considered, it cannot be a matter of wonder that this little boy, as he grew older, should love his bearer more than all the world besides; for his bearer was his best friend, no one else taking any thought about him. He could not speak English, but he could talk with Boosy in his language as fast as possible; and he knew every word, good or bad, which the natives spoke. He used to sit in the *verandah*,* between his bearer's knees, and chew *paun*,† and eat *bazar*‡ sweetmeats. He wore no shoes nor stockings; but was dressed in *pangammahs*§ and had his silver *bangles*|| on his ankles. No one could have told by his behaviour or manner of speaking that he was not a native, but his pretty light hair and blue eyes at once showed his parentage.

* An open gallery or passage.

† An intoxicating mixture of opium and sugar, &c.

‡ A market. § Trowsers.

|| Ornaments generally worn round the wrists and ankles.

Thus his life passed till he was five years and a half old: for the lady in whose house he lived (although he was taught to call her mamma) paid him no kind of attention; and it never occurred to her that it was right to give him any religious instruction. He used to see his bearer and the other natives performing *pukah*,* and carrying about their wooden gods; and he knew that his mamma sometimes went to church at Dinapore: so he believed that there were a great many gods, and that the God that his mamma went to pray to at Dinapore was no better than the gods of wood, and stone, and clay, which his bearer worshipped. He also believed that the River Ganges was a goddess, and called Gunga: and that the water of the river would take away sins. He believed, too, that the Mussulmans were as good as Christians, for his mamma's *khaunsummaru*† had told him so. Besides these, he was taught by the servants many other things which a little boy should not know: but the servants being heathens, could not be expected to teach him anything better; and therefore they were not so much to be blamed as the lady who had undertaken the charge of Henry, who might have been ashamed to leave the child of Christian parents under the care of such persons.

When Henry was five years old a young

* Ceremony; offering. † A kind of house-steward.

lady, who was just arrived from England, came to reside for awhile with his mamma. She was the daughter of a worthy clergyman in England, and had received from him a religious education. She had brought with her from home a box of Bibles, and some pretty little children's books and pictures. When she saw poor little Henry sitting in the verandah, as his custom was, between his bearer's knees, with many other native servants surrounding him, she loved him, and was very sorry for him; for, indeed, it is a dreadful thing for little children to be left among people who know not God. So she took some of the prettiest coloured pictures she had, and spread them on the floor of the room, the door of which happened to open into the verandah near the place where the little boy usually sat. When Henry peeped in and saw the pictures, he was tempted by them to come into the room; but at first he would not venture in without his bearer.

Afterwards, when he got more accustomed to the lady, he was contented that his bearer should sit at the door, while he went in. And at last he quite lost all fear, and would go in by himself; nay, he never was more happy than when he was with this lady; for she tried every means to gain his love, in order that she might lead him to receive such instruction as the time of her intended stay with his mamma would allow her to give him.

She was very sorry when she found that he could not speak English : however, she was resolved not to be checked by this difficulty. She taught him many English words by showing him things represented in the coloured pictures, telling him their English names ; so that in a short time he could ask for anything he wanted in English. She then taught him his letters in one of the little books she had brought from home, and from his letters she proceeded to spelling ; and so diligent was she, that before he was six years old he could spell any words, however difficult, and could speak English quite readily.

While this young lady was taking pains, from day to day, to teach little Henry to read, she endeavoured, by word of mouth, to make him acquainted with such parts of the Christian religion as even the youngest ought to know, and without the knowledge of which no one can be a Christian ; and she did not like to wait until Henry could read his Bible, before she would instruct him in subjects of so much importance.

The first lesson of this kind which she strove to teach him was that there was only one true God, and that he made all things—namely, the glorious heaven, to which those persons go who have been made the children of God on earth ; and the dreadful hell, prepared for those who die in their sins ; the world, and all things in it ; the sun, the moon,

the stars, and all the heavenly bodies. And she was going to teach him the following words from Colossians i. 16—"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth"—but no sooner did little Henry understand that she meant to teach him that there is but *one* God, than he got very angry, and told her that she did not speak *a true word*; for his mamma had a God, and his bearer had a god, and there were a great many gods: and he ran out into the verandah and told his bearer what the *choota bebee** had said; and down he sat between his bearer's knees, and would not come again to her that day, although she brought out her finest pictures and a new book, on purpose to tempt him.

The young lady did not fail to pray very earnestly for little Henry that night, when she was withdrawn to her room, and her door shut; and her Father, on whom she called in secret, heard her prayer, for the next day little Henry came smiling into her room, having quite forgotten his fit of ill humour; and she was now enabled to talk to him with advantage on the same subject. And she made him kneel down, and pray to God to give him sense to understand the truth. She had also provided herself with one of the Hindoo gods made of baked earth, and she bid him look at it, and examine it well. She then

* Young lady.

threw it down upon the floor, and it was broken into a hundred pieces. Then she said, "Henry, what can this god do for you? it cannot help itself. Call to it, and ask it to get up. You see it cannot move." And that day the little boy was convinced by her arguments.

The next discourse which the young lady had with Henry was upon the nature of God. She taught him that God is a Spirit; that He is everywhere; that He can do everything; that He can see everything; that He can hear everything: that He knows even the inmost thoughts of our hearts; that He loves that which is good, and hates that which is evil; that He never had a beginning, and never would have an end.

Henry now began to take pleasure in hearing of God, and asked many questions about him. He next learnt that God made the world in six days, and rested from his work on the seventh; and that he made man and woman innocent at first. He then was taught how our forefather Adam was tempted, with Eve, his wife, to eat the forbidden fruit, and how, by this means, sin entering into the world, and the nature of Adam becoming sinful, all we, his children, being born in his likeness, are sinful also.

Henry here asked what sin is?

"Sin, my child," answered the lady, "is whatever displeases God. If your mamma

were to desire you to come into her room, or do something for her, and you were to refuse, would she not have reason to be displeased with you?"

"Yes; I suppose so."

"Or, if you ask Boosy to fan you, or to carry you in your palanquin, and Boosy does something quite different; or if you desire him to carry you one way, and he carries you another, would he not do wrong?"

"Yes; to be sure."

"Well, then, whatever you do contrary to the commands of God displeases him, and is sin."

But the lady still found great difficulty in making Henry understand the nature of sin; for he had been so neglected that he did not know right from wrong. He did not consider a lie as sinful, nor feel ashamed of stealing, unless it was found out. He thought, also, that if anybody hurt him it was right to hurt them in return. After several days, however, she made the subject clear to him, and then further explained how sin has corrupted all our hearts; and she made him repeat the following words till he could say them quite well: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."—Ps. xiv. 2, 3.

She next made the little boy understand

that eternal death, or everlasting punishment, is the consequence of sin ; and he soon could repeat two or three verses to prove this. One was, "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God,"—1 Cor. vi. 9 ; and another—"They shall look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me ; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched : and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."—Isa. lxvi. 24.

And now the lady had brought Henry to know that he and all the world were sinners, and that the punishment of sin is eternal death, and that it was not in his power to save himself, nor for anything on the earth to wash him from his sins ; and she had brought him several times to ask her with great earnestness what he must do to be saved, and how his sins could be forgiven, and his heart freed from evil tempers. Her next lesson, therefore, was to explain to him what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for him : how "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory,"—1 Tim. iii. 16 ; and how "we have redemption through his blood, he having made peace for us through the blood of his cross."—Col. i. 14, 20.

Little Henry was particularly pleased whenever he heard of our Saviour ; and by divine grace his heart seemed to be wonderfully filled

with love for his Redeemer; and he was so afraid of offending Him, that he became careful of every word he said, and of everything he did; and he was always asking the young lady if this was right, and if that was right, and if God would be angry with him if he did this or that, so that in a short time his whole behaviour was altered. He never said a bad word, and was vexed when he heard any other person do it. He spoke mildly and civilly to everybody. He would return the *salam** of the poorest *coolie*† in the bazaar. If anybody had given him a *rupce*‡ he would not spend it in sweatmeats or playthings, but he would change it into *pice*§ and give it to the *fakcers*|| who were blind or lame, or such as seemed to be in real distress, as far as it would go.

One day Henry came into the lady's room, and found her opening a box of books. "Come," said she, "Henry, help me to unpack these books, and to carry them to my bookcase." Now, while they were thus busy, and little Henry, much pleased to think that he could make himself useful, the lady said, "These books have different kinds of

* Health : salutation.

† A kind of low caste of men, who have no trade, but work at any kind of common employment.

‡ A gold coin.

§ Pence.

|| Beggars : a religious order of men, something like monks or dervises.

covers, and some are larger than others, but they all contain the same words, and are the Book of God. If you read one of these books, and keep the sayings written in it, it will bring you to heaven—it will bring you to where your beloved Redeemer is, to the throne of the Lamb of God, who was slain for your sins.”

“Oh, I wish,” said Henry, “that I had one of these books! I will give you all my playthings, ma’am, and my little carriage, for one of them.”

The lady smiled and said, “No, my dear; keep your playthings, and your little carriage too; you shall have any one of these books you like best.”

Henry thanked the lady with all his heart, and called Boosy in to give his advice whether he should choose a book with a purple morocco cover, or one with a red one. When he had fixed upon one, he begged a bit of silk of the lady, and carried it to the tailor to make him a bag for his new Bible; and that same evening he came to the lady to beg her to teach him to read it. So that day he began; and he was several days over the first chapter of Genesis, but the next chapter was easier, and the next easier still, till very soon he was able to read any part of the Bible without hesitation.

With what joy and gratitude to God did the young lady see the effect of her pious labours! She had, in the space of a year and a half,

brought a little orphan from the grossest state of heathen darkness and ignorance to a competent knowledge of those doctrines of the Christian religion which are chiefly necessary to salvation. She had put into his hand the Book of God, and had taught him to read it; and God had, in an especial manner, answered all her prayers for the dear child.

The time was now coming on very fast when she must leave little Henry; and the thoughts of this parting were very painful to her. Some days before she set out on her journey, she called him into her room, and questioned him concerning the things which she had taught him, directing him, as often as he could, to give his answers from the Bible. Her first question was, "How many gods are there?"

Henry.—"There is one God; and there is none other but he."—Mark xii. 32.

Lady.—"Do we not believe that there are three persons in this one God?"

Henry.—"There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."—1 John v. 7.

Lady.—"What do you mean by the Word?"

Henry.—"The Word is the Lord Jesus Christ."

Lady.—"Do you know that from the Bible?"

Henry.—"Yes; for St. John says, in the first chapter of his Gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.'"

Lady.—"Did God make man good at first?"

Henry.—"Yes; for in the first chapter of the Bible, the last verse, it is written, 'God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.'"

Lady.—"Are men very good now? Can you find me one person who deserves to be called good?"

Henry.—"I need not look into the Bible to answer that question. I need but just get into the palanquin, and go into the bazaar, and show you the people there. I am sure I could not find one good person in all the bazaar."

Lady.—"But I think, Henry, you might spare yourself the trouble of going into the bazaar to see how bad human creatures are: could you not find proofs of that nearer home?"

Henry.—"What, our servants you mean? Or, perhaps, the ladies who are in the hall with my mamma? they laughed at the Bible at breakfast; I knew what they meant, very well; and my mamma laughed too: I am sure nobody can say that they are good."

Lady.—"No, my dear; those poor ladies

are not good ; it would be misleading you, to say that they are. But as we cannot make them better by speaking ill of them in their absence, it would be better not to mention them at all, unless it were in prayer to God that he would turn their hearts. But to return to my question—You need not go so far as the hall for an answer to it. There is a little boy in this very room, called Henry ; can he be said to be a good boy ? A very few months ago, that little boy used to tell lies every day ; and only yesterday I saw him in a passion, because the *sais** would not let him get on the back of one of the coach-horses : and I think, but I am not sure, that he gave the *sais* a blow with his hand.”

Henry.—“ I know it was very wicked, but I had no stick in my hand, and therefore I hope I did not hurt him. I hope God will give me grace never to do so again. I gave the *sais* all that I had left of my rupee this morning ; and I told him that I was very sorry.”

Lady.—“ I mentioned it, my dear, that you might know where to look for an answer to my question.”

Henry.—“ Oh ! I know that I am not good. I have done many, many naughty things, which nobody knows of ; no, not even Boosy. And God only can know the naughtiness of my heart.”

Lady.—“ Then you think yourself a sinner ?”

* Coachman.

Henry.—"A very great one."

Lady.—"Where do sinners go when they die?"

Henry.—"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."—Ps. ix. 17.

Lady.—"If all wicked people are turned into hell, how can you escape?"

Henry.—"If I believe in the Lord Jesus, I shall be saved. Stay one moment, and I will show you the verse. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'"—Acts xvi. 31.

Lady.—"What! if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, shall you go to heaven with all your sins? Can sinful creatures be in heaven?"

Henry.—"No; to be sure not. God cannot live with sinners. He is 'of purer eyes than to behold evil.'—Hab. i. 13. But if I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, he will take away my sin; for his 'blood cleanseth from all sin:'—1 John i 7; and he will give me a new heart, and make me a new creature, and I shall purify myself, as 'he is pure.'"—1 John iii. 3.

Now the lady was pleased with little Henry's answers; and she thanked God in her heart for having so blessed her labours with the poor little boy. But she did not praise him, lest he should become proud; and she well knew that "God resisteth the

proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”—James iv. 6. So she refrained from commending him ; but she said, “What do you mean, my dear, by being made quite new again?”

Henry.—“Before I knew the Lord Jesus Christ, I used to think of nothing but naughty things. I loved myself more than anybody else. I loved eating fruit and sweetmeats ; and was so greedy of them, that I would have told a hundred lies, I do think, for one mouthful of them. Then I was passionate and proud. I used to be so pleased when anybody bowed to me and said ‘Sahib.’ And you cannot think how cruel I was to all kinds of little creatures I could get hold of, even the poor cockroaches : I used to kill them just for my own pleasure. But now I do think my heart is beginning to change a little, I mean a very little, for I gave all my last sweetmeats to the *matre’s** boy. But still I know that my heart is far from being clean yet ; but God can make it white and clean when he pleases.”

Lady.—“You must pray every day, and oftentimes in the day, and in the night when you are awake, my dear child, that God will send his Holy Spirit into your heart, to make it clean and pure, and to lead and direct you in all you do. Blessed are those, my dear child, who love the Lord Jesus

* A sweeper : a person of low caste, who eats everything.

Christ! for unto them 'the spirit of truth' shall be revealed; and it 'shall dwell with them, and be in them.'—John xiv. 17.

She then shut the door of the room; and she and the little boy knelt down together, and prayed to God, that he would, for his dear Son's sake, "create a clean heart in the child, and renew a right spirit within him."—Ps. li. 10. When the young lady arose from her knees, she kissed little Henry and told him, not without many tears, that she must soon go away from him.

When Henry heard this news, for some moments he could not speak; at length he cried out, "What shall I do when you are gone! I shall have nobody to speak to but my bearer, for my mamma does not love me; and I shall spend all my time with the natives. I shall never more hear anybody talk of God. Oh! I very much fear that I shall become wicked again."

"My poor child," said the lady, "do not doubt the power of God. When our Saviour was going to leave his disciples, he said, 'I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.'—John xiv. 18. And do you think, my child, that after the blessed Lord God has made himself known unto you, and adopted you as a dear son, that he will leave you comfortless? Think how good he was to call you from the paths of destruction, and from the way of hell. You knew not so much as

his holy name, and were living altogether among the heathens. It was by his providence that I came here; that I remained here so long; that I loved you, and endeavoured to teach you; and that I had a Bible to give you. 'Faithful is he,' my beloved child, 'who called you. He will preserve your whole spirit and soul and body blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus.'" —1 Thess. v. 23, 24. She then sung a verse of a hymn to him; which he often repeated, and would try to sing when she was far away from him :

“ Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God ;
He, to save my soul from danger,
Interposed his precious blood.”

Now it would take more time than I have to spare to repeat the several conversations which this young lady had with little Henry before she went away. He cried sadly the day she went. He followed her down to the river-side: for she was going down to Berhampore, where she was soon afterwards married to a very pious young man of the name of Baron.

Henry went on board the *budgerow*,* to take leave of her. She kissed him many times before they parted; and gave Boosy, who was with him, four rupees, buckshish, that he

* A kind of barge.

might continue to behave well to his little sahib. The last words almost that she said to Henry were these: "You must try, my dear child, with the grace of God, to make Boosy a Christian! that he may be no longer numbered among the heathen, but may be counted among the sons of God."

When the budgerow was ready to sail, little Henry took his last leave of the lady, and came on shore; where he stood under the shade of a Braminee fig-tree,* watching the boat as it sailed down the broad stream of the Ganges, till it was hidden by the winding shore. Then Boosy, taking him up in his arms, brought him back to his mamma's house: and from that time he was as much neglected as he had been before this good young lady came; with this difference only (and that indeed was a blessing for which I doubt not he will thank God to all eternity), that he was now able to read the Book of God! whereas before he knew not even God's holy name.

Sometimes his mamma would let him eat his *tiffin*† with her: but, as she always employed herself at table (when not actually eating) in smoking her *hookah*,‡ and as most

* A tree that takes root downward from its branches.

† Luncheon.

‡ A kind of pipe, the smoke of which is drawn through water, and the motion of the air through the water causes a bubbling noise.

of her visitors did the same, the tiffin-time was very stupid to the little boy; for, instead of pleasant and useful discourse, there was in general nothing to be heard at these meals but the rattling of plates and knives and forks, the creaking of the *punkah*,* and the guggling of the water in the hookah; except his mamma (which not unseldom happened) occasioned a little variety by scolding the servants, and calling them names in their own language.

So poor little Henry found no better companion than his bearer; and he never was more pleased than when he was sitting by him in the verandah, reading his Bible to himself.

And now the young lady's last words returned to his mind, namely, "You must try to make Boosy a Christian." But he did not know how to begin this work: it seemed to him, that the heart of poor Boosy could only be changed by the immediate interference of God: so fond was he of his wooden gods and foolish ceremonies, and so much was he afraid of offending his *guroo*.† And in this respect Henry judged rightly; for no one can come to God without the help of God: yet he has pointed out the means by which we must endeavour to bring our fellow-creatures to him; and we must, in faith and humility, use these means, praying for the divine blessing to render them effectual.

* A large fan suspended from the ceiling.

† A religious teacher or confessor.

The first step which Henry took towards this work was to pray for Boosy. After some thought, he made a prayer, which was much to this purpose: "O Lord God, hear the humble prayer of a poor little sinful child. Give me power, O God, for thy dear Son's sake (who died for us upon the cross), to turn the heart of my poor bearer from his wooden gods, and to lead him to the cross of Jesus Christ." This prayer he never failed to repeat every night, and many times a day: and from time to time he used to talk to Boosy, and repeat to him many things which the young lady had taught him. But although Boosy heard him with good-humour, yet he did not seem to pay much heed to what the child said; for he would argue to this purpose: "There are many brooks and rivers of water, but they all run into the sea at last; so there are a great many religions, but they all lead to heaven: there is the Mussulman's way to heaven, and the Hindoo's way, and the Christian's way: and one way is as good as another." He asserted, also, that if he were to commit the greatest sin, and were to go immediately afterwards and wash in the Ganges, he should be quite innocent. And a great many other foolish things he had to say to the same purpose, so that he sometimes quite out-talked the child. But Henry was so earnest in the cause he had undertaken, that, although he might be silenced at one time, yet he would

often (after having said his prayer, and consulted his Bible) begin the attack again. He would sometimes get close to him, and look in his face, and say, "Poor Boosy! poor Boosy! you are going the wrong way, and will not let me set you right: there is but one way to heaven; our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is 'the way' to heaven, and 'no man cometh unto God but by him.'"—John xiv. 6. Then he would try to explain who the Lord Jesus Christ is: how he came down to the earth; that he took man's nature upon him; suffered and died upon the cross for the sins of men; was buried, and arose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven; and is now sitting at the right hand of God, from whence he will come to judge the quick and the dead.

In this manner the little boy proceeded from day to day: but Boosy seemed to pay him little or no attention; nay, he would sometimes laugh at him, and ask him why he was so earnest about a thing of so little consequence? However, to do Boosy justice, he never was ill-humoured or disrespectful to his little sahib.

Now it happened, about this time, that Henry's mamma had occasion to go to Calcutta; and, as she went by water, she took Henry and his bearer in the budgerow with her. Henry had not been well, and she thought the change of air might do him good. It was at the end of the rains;—at that season

of the year when India is most green and beautiful, although not most healthy. When the budgerow came to anchor in an evening, Henry used to take a walk with his bearer; and sometimes they would ramble among the fields and villages for more than a mile from the river. Henry had all his life been confined to one spot; so, you may be sure, he was well pleased to see so many different countries, and asked many questions about the things which he saw. And often, during these rambles, he used to have an argument with Boosy concerning the great Creator of all things; and Henry would say to his bearer, that the great God, who made all things, could not be like the gods which he believed in, which, according to his accounts of them, were more wicked and foolish than the worst men.

Once, in particular—it was in one of those lovely places near the Rajamahals hills—Henry and his bearer went to walk. Henry's mamma had during the day been very cross to him, and the poor little fellow did not feel well, although he did not complain; but he was glad when he got out of the boat.

The sun was just setting, and a cool breeze blew over the water, with which the little boy being refreshed, climbed without difficulty to the top of a little hill where there was a tomb. Here they sat down: and Henry could not but admire the beautiful prospect which was before them. On their left hand was the

broad stream of the Ganges winding round the curved shore, till it was lost behind the Rajamahals hills. The budgerow, gaily painted, anchored just below them; and with it many lesser boats, with thatched and sloping roofs. The *dandies** and native servants, having finished their day's work, were preparing their *khauna*, in distinct parties, according to their several castes, upon the banks of the river: some grinding their *mussala*,† some lighting their little fires, some washing their brass vessels, and others sitting in a circle upon the ground smoking their cocoa-nut hookahs. Before them, and on their right hand, was a beautiful country, abounding with corn-fields, *topes*‡ of trees, thatched cottages with their little bamboo porches, plaintain and palm-trees; beyond which the Rajamahals hills were seen, some bare to their summits, and others covered with *jungle*,§ which even now afford a shelter to tigers, rhinoceroses, and wild hogs.

Henry sat silent a long time. At last he said, "Boosy this is a good country—that is, it would be a very good country if the people were Christians. Then they would not be so idle as they now are; and they would agree together, and clear the jungles, and build churches to worship God in. It will

* Boatmen.

† A general name for spices, salt, medicine, &c.

‡ Clumps.

§ Uncultivated waste land, overrun with brushwood or reeds.

be pleasant to see the people, when they are Christians, all going on a Sunday morning to some pretty church built among those hills, and to see them in an evening sitting at the door of their houses reading the *shaster**—I do not mean your shaster, but our shaster, God's book."

Boosy answered, that he knew there would be a time when all the world would be of one religion, and when there would be no caste; but he did not know when that would be, and he was sure he should not live to see it.

"There is a country, now," said Henry, "where there are no castes; and where we all shall be like dear brothers. It is a better country than this: there are no evil beasts; there is no more hunger, no more thirst; there the waters are sure; there the sun does not scorch by day, nor the moon smite by night. It is a country to which I sometimes think and hope I shall go very soon: I wish, Boosy, you would be persuaded either to go with me or to follow me."

"What!" said Boosy, "is sahib going to *Willact*?"† And then he said, "he hoped not; for he could never follow him, as no Hindoo can go to sea."

Henry then explained to him, that he did not mean England, but heaven. "Sometimes I think," said he, "when I feel the pain

* The Hindoo religious books.

† Country; but generally applied to Europe.

which I did this morning, that I shall not live long: I think I shall die soon, Boosy. Oh, I wish, I wish I could persuade you to love the Lord Jesus Christ!" And then Henry, getting up, went to Boosy, and sat down upon his knee, and begged him to be a Christian. "Dear Boosy," he said, "good Boosy, do try to be a Christian." But poor little Henry's attempts were yet quite ineffectual.

In little more than a month's time from their leaving Dinapore they reached Calcutta, and were received into the house of a worthy gentleman of the name of Smith. When Henry's mamma was settled in Mr. Smith's house, she found less inclination, if possible, than ever to pay any attention to Henry. According to the custom of India, she must pay the first visit to all her acquaintance in Calcutta. Her dresses, too, having all been made at Dinapore, did not agree with the last European fashions which had come out: these were all to be altered, and new ones bought; and it was a good deal of trouble to direct the tailor to do this properly. Her hair was not dressed in the fashion; and her *ajah** was very stupid; it was many days before she could forget the old way, and learn the new one. So poor Henry was quite forgotten in all this bustle: and, although he was for several days very ill, and complained

* A waiting-maid

to his bearer that his side gave him great pain, yet his mamma never knew it.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith once or twice remarked, when they looked at Henry, that the child was very pale, and that his eyes were heavy; but his mamma answered, "Oh, it's nothing, the child is well enough; children in India, you know, have that look."

It happened one afternoon, as Mr. and Mrs. Smith, and Henry's mamma, were in the drawing-room after tiffin, while the ladies were giving their opinion upon a magazine, which contained an account of the last European fashion of carriages and dresses, &c. (for I am sorry to say that Mrs. Smith, although she had the best example in her husband, had still to learn not to love the world), Mr. Smith, half angry with them, and yet not knowing whether he should presume to give them a check, was walking up and down the room with a rather hasty step; when his eye, as he passed the door, caught little Henry sitting on the mat at the head of the stairs, between his bearer's knees, with his Bible in his hand. His back being turned towards the drawing-room door, Mr. Smith had an opportunity of observing what he was about without being seen; he accordingly stood still, and listened; and he heard the gentle voice of Henry, as he tried to interpret the sacred book to his bearer in the bearer's own language.

Soon after this Henry removed to Berhampore, and one afternoon took seriously ill.

There was a considerable change in the child during the night : and all the next day till evening he lay in a kind of slumber ; and when he was roused to take his medicine or nourishment, he seemed not to know where he was, or who was with him. In the evening he suddenly revived, and asked for his mamma. He had seldom asked for her before. She was in the house ; for she was not so hard-hearted (thoughtless as she was) as to go into gay company at this time, when the child's death might be hourly expected.

She trembled much when she heard that he asked for her. She was conscious, perhaps, that she had not fulfilled her duty by him. He received her affectionately, when she went up to his bed-side, and begged that everybody would go out of the room, saying, that he had something very particular to speak about. He talked to her for some time, but nobody knows the particulars of their conversation : though it is believed that the care of her immortal soul was the subject of the last discourse which this dear little boy held with her.

She came out of his room with her eyes swelled with crying, and his little well-worn Bible in her hand (which he had probably given her, as it always lay on his bed by him), and shutting herself in her room, she remained without seeing any one, till the news was brought that all was over. From that time she never gave her mind so entirely to the

world as she had formerly done ; but became a more serious character, and daily read little Henry's Bible.

The next day at twelve o'clock, being Sunday, he was delivered from this evil world, and received into glory. His passage was calm, although not without some mortal pangs. "May we die the death of the righteous, and may our last end be like his!"—Num. xviii. 10.

Mr. and Mrs. Baron and his bearer attended him to the last moment, and Mr. Baron followed him to the grave.

Some time after his death his mamma caused a monument to be built over his grave, on which was inscribed his name, Henry L——, and his age, which at the time of his death was eight years and seven months. Underneath was a part of his favourite verse, from 1 Thessalonians v., altering only one word—"Faithful is he that called me." And afterwards was added, by desire of Mr. Smith, this verse from James v. 20, "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

When I first visited Berhampore, I went to see little Henry's monument. It was then white and fair, and the inscription very plain ; but I am told that the damp of that climate has so defaced the inscription, and blackened the whole monument, that it cannot be distinguished from the tombs which surround it.

But this is of little consequence, as all who remember Henry L—— have long ago left Berhampore, and we are assured that this dear child has himself received “an inheritance that fadeth not away.”—1 Pet. i. 4. “The world passed away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”—1 John ii. 17.

Every person who reads this story will, I think, be anxious to know what became of Boosy. Immediately after the funeral of his little sahib, having received his wages, with a handsome present; he carried the lock of hair, which Mrs. Baron sealed up carefully, with a letter from her to Mr. Smith. He was received into Mr. Smith’s family, and removed with him to a distant part of India; where, shortly after, he renounced caste, and declared himself a Christian. After due examination, he was baptized; and continued till his death (which happened not very long after) a sincere Christian. It was on the occasion of the baptism of Boosy, to whom the Christian name of John was given, that the last verse was added to the monument of little Henry.



THE LOST CHILD.



CHAPTER I.

THE CHILD LOST.

THEODORA, the widow of a poor fisherman, resided in a little isolated cottage on the banks of the Danube. She had lost her husband, who was yet in the flower of his age, but a short time before ; and her only consolation in her premature widowhood was her child, a fair and handsome little boy, Augustus, about five years old. Her only care was to bring him up in the strictest principles of probity and virtue ; and her sole anxiety was that she might be able to preserve for him the cottage of his father, and his fishing implements. After the death of her husband, the occupation was not carried on ; and the nets which hung upon the walls, as well as the boat overturned near the cottage, were to her objects of continual grief

and sorrow. She earned something by making nets, a work in which she had great skill ; and very often, while Augustus had been long asleep, the morning surprised her still up, and working with ardour.

The child had only one wish and one desire, and that was, to please and comfort his good mother. She shed tears on every occasion that reminded her of her poor husband ; and Augustus always attempted to console her, after his manner. One day the brother of the widow, a fisherman in a neighbouring village, brought her a fine fish. Theodora looked at it, and began to weep. ‘Alas!’ she said, ‘I did not think that I should ever see such a beautiful fish again under my roof.’

Augustus then exclaimed, ‘Do not weep, mamma. When I shall grow up, I will bring you many such.’

The sorrowful mother began to smile, and said, ‘Yes, Augustus ; I hope that you will be some day the consolation and support of my old age. Be as good, as brave, and as virtuous a man as your father was, and I shall esteem myself the happiest of mothers.’

Upon another day—it was at the most beautiful period of the autumnal season—Theodora

had been working ever since morning upon a net that she wished to finish that day ; Augustus, on his part, was gathering wood in the forest. He was delighted every time that he was able to bring back to his mother his little basket filled with branches ; and Theodora felicitated herself every time, that he was, at so early an age, becoming habituated to industry and a life of labour.

Noon was approaching ; and the little fellow was fatigued and hungry. The clock in the steeple of the neighbouring village was heard striking ; and Theodora called him to eat his dinner under the lofty beech-tree that grew not far from her cottage, in a lovely and verdant part of the forest. She had taken there their humble repast, which consisted of a bowl full of milk, and some crumbled bread.

When there was nothing left in the porringer, his mother said to Augustus, ‘ Now, go and lie down, and sleep a little in the shade of that tree. For my part, I will go to my work ; and when it is time, I will come and waken you.’

Some time afterwards, she went back to look at Augustus, who was still asleep under

the tree. His little head, with flaxen and curly hair, rested upon one of his arms. He smiled in his sleep ; and the trembling foliage of the beech-tree shaded his face and his rosy cheeks. Theodora hastened back to her net, and worked at it assiduously until it was entirely finished.

The hours had flowed on as though they were so many minutes ; and, perceiving that it was late, she went to awaken the little Augustus ; but she did not find him under the tree. ‘The good child has already gone back to his work, with his basket,’ she exclaimed, with joy. Alas ! she was far from suspecting the frightful misfortune that awaited her.

She returned to the cottage, and then came to stretch her net out upon the grass. After some time, as the child had not yet returned, she began to feel uneasy ; and she set out to search the forest, which was about a league in length, and half a league in width. ‘Augustus ! Augustus !’ but echo alone repeated her cries. Her uneasiness then increased, and she became seriously alarmed. ‘Can he have fallen into the water?’ she said to herself. This thought made her tremble. She searched

along the banks of the stream, but could not find any trace of her son.

Weeping bitterly, she then ran to the village; and a crowd of inhabitants soon gathered around her. They all participated in her affliction; and her brother was as much distressed as herself. No one, however, had seen the child; and they all proceeded to assist her in her search. Some spread themselves through the wood, others in the neighbourhood, some upon the banks of the river. The night came on, and no one had obtained any satisfactory information.

‘If he is drowned in the Danube,’ said a fisherman of the village, ‘we shall recover his body; for we know the course of the stream. The body will certainly be thrown up down below there, at that spot of turf where the old willow grows.’

The poor mother listened to all their remarks, and went back to her cottage with a broken heart. She passed the night in watching and weeping; and, as soon as the break of day, she hastened to the river, expecting that she should probably find there, alas! the body of her beloved son. Days and weeks, however, passed away. Evening and morning

she ran, sorrowful and weeping, to the banks of the river, and always in vain. The fishermen, when they went to their work in the morning, and when they came back in the evening, always found her at the same spot, weeping, and with her hands raised to heaven. She was heart-broken.

It was thus that years passed away. The body was not recovered; and the afflicted mother could learn nothing respecting the fate of her poor son. It would be impossible to describe her grief and her sorrow.

‘In so short a time,’ she exclaimed, ‘to lose my beloved husband, and my dear son, is very hard to bear. I believe that I should die under it, if I had not the consoling thought that Heaven does all things for the best.’ She often reproached herself bitterly and severely. ‘I should have watched over him more attentively,’ she would exclaim, weeping, and wringing her hands.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHILD'S HISTORY.



WHILE this desolate mother was deploring the death of her son, he, five years and a few months old, had arrived, after having travelled more than a hundred leagues, at the city of Vienna. He resided there, safe and whole, in a magnificent mansion. He was, moreover, dressed as well and as handsomely as if he had been born of a noble family; and, what was better still, he was brought up with the greatest care, and received, from the best masters, a solid and distinguished education. This wonderful change in his position was brought about in the following manner.

When Augustus, whom we left sleeping under the beech-tree, awoke, he rubbed his eyes, and went into the wood in search of branches. He had soon half filled his basket; and, having passed over a great distance, he came to the borders of the forest, on the bank of the river. He there found, moored to the bank,

a vessel which had stopped, and which was waiting while the passengers landed. Amongst the passengers were some children who, while the grown-up persons were promenading backwards and forwards upon the fresh grass to relieve themselves of the fatigue of the voyage, settled themselves upon the greensward by the edge of the water, and began to play at marbles. They saw Augustus, and approached him. They looked at him, and at what he had in his little basket. The pretty brown fruit of the beech-tree, of which he had some, and which they had never seen before, pleased them very much. 'That is beautiful fruit,' exclaimed one who was rather younger than Augustus. 'We never saw such chestnuts as these.'

'They are not chestnuts,' replied Augustus. 'They are the fruit of the beech-tree, and they are not fit to eat.' He then distributed them amongst the children. Augustus was delighted to find himself amongst so many joyful play-fellows. It was a happiness that he had never had before; for he had seen very little of the children of the village. He mixed amongst them; and they shared with him some fruit that they had.

He was then curious to get a nearer sight of the vessel, for he had never seen one of so large a size. This floating house, larger than his mother's cottage, seemed to him a very wonderful thing. The children took him on board; and Antonia, the little girl who took notice of the beech nuts, led him into the tapestried saloon. 'How!' exclaimed Augustus, thoroughly astonished, 'there are handsomer rooms in this house than there are in ours.'

Antonia and her companions showed him all their playthings, and Augustus was so absorbed in the contemplation of these riches, that he never thought of returning home. During this time, and without the child being aware of it, the vessel was afloat again. It departed from the bank, and majestically descended the river.

No one on board the vessel had paid any attention to the little boy; or at least those passengers who had been on board from the commencement of the voyage, thought he belonged to the new passengers who had just embarked; while these, on the contrary, thought that he was one of the children who had been there from the first. In the even-

ing, however, Augustus began to cry, and to call for his mother; and it was then found that the vessel contained a strange child. One may imagine the astonishment and the confusion that his cries occasioned amongst the passengers. Some, pitying him, lamented for the mother and the child. Others, on the contrary, laughed at the unexpected manner in which they had fallen in with a new travelling companion. But the sailors were furious, and were upon the point of throwing the child into the river.

At length the captain of the vessel came, and, taking the child aside, he spoke to him with a severe air, saying, 'Tell me, child, from what city or village you came.'

'I am not from any city, or from any village,' replied Augustus.

'That is singular,' replied the sailor. 'You must have lived somewhere.'

'Our house,' said the child, 'is in the wood, not far from the village.'

'Very well,' continued his questioner; 'but what do they call the village?'

'Ah!' replied Augustus, 'the village is called—the village. My mother never calls it anything else. "It is striking noon in the

village," she says ; or, " To-morrow, I will go with you to the village, to buy some bread."

' But what do they call your parents?' asked the captain, with vexation.

' My father is dead,' replied Augustus; ' and they ordinarily called my mother the poor fisherwoman, Theodora.'

' So her Christian name is Theodora,' said the sailor; ' but what is her surname?'

' She has no other name but Theodora,' replied the child; ' and she often says one ought not to give names to other people, for then they would be nicknames.'

The captain saw that he must give up any hope of obtaining information from the innocent child, who did not even know his own surname. He became red with anger, and exclaimed, ' I wish the cuckoo¹ had brought you anywhere else but on board my vessel !'

The good child, whose eyes were filled with tears, replied, very sorrowfully, and without the least ill-will, ' The cuckoo did not bring me here. I have never seen it; but I sometimes hear it in the spring.'

All the passengers laughed at this answer,

¹ The cuckoo is used in Germany to frighten children.

but the sailors found themselves in great difficulty ; for unfortunately they were, at that time, upon a part of the Danube that traversed an uncultivated district, covered with wood and uninhabited, and where they appeared to be very far from any village.

After a while, when the sun was nearly set, they saw in the distance the top of a steeple ; and the captain of the vessel wished to take the child there, that he might from thence be sent back to his mother ; but Monsieur Wahl, the father of Antonia, objected to it. He was a rich merchant, who was carrying with him trunks full of money and articles of value, and who, as well as the other passengers, was flying before the enemy ; for Germany was at that time subjected to the disastrous influences of a severe war.

‘I wish with all my heart,’ said Monsieur Wahl, ‘that his sorrowing mother had her poor son back again ; but this is not a time when this can be done. The enemy are on the march, and are approaching the banks of the Danube. A delay of a few hours might be fatal to us. It might throw us into their power, and cause us to lose all that we possess. In the name of God, continue your journey.’

Monsieur Wahl, who was the subject of great uneasiness, urgently insisted that the sailors should sail all the night, that they might take advantage of the full moon ; but they replied it was contrary to their custom. As the merchant, however, promised the captain and his crew a good sum of money, they at length consented, and continued their voyage.

When the sun rose, they had arrived at a little village that was situated on the bank of the river. The captain requested the peasants to receive the child, and entreated them to seek information in the neighbourhood, as to where his mother lived, and to take him back to her. He represented to them that it would be, on their part, a meritorious and charitable action ; but the peasants replied, ‘ Who knows to whom the little boy may belong ? It may be impossible for us to find out to whom to return him ; and then we should be obliged to take care of him, and bring him up ourselves ; but, as times now are, we have enough of our own miseries, without charging ourselves with those of other people.’

Soon afterwards, they perceived on the other side of the river, a village not far

from the bank, and which appeared to be large and rich. The captain wished to go to the mayor, or to the clergyman, and request one of them to take care of the child. He ordered the vessel to be stopped, and was about to land, when Monsieur Wahl suddenly exclaimed, 'Hark! Don't you hear the sound of cannon? The enemy are near us. We must not lose an instant. Forward! forward with the vessel!'

Fearing that, in the end, he should have the charge of the child thrown upon himself, the captain opposed Monsieur Wahl; and soon a serious quarrel would have broken out between them, if the wife of the latter, a good and gentle lady, had not interposed between them. She said to her husband in a low voice, and with all the benevolence and goodness of soul that she possessed, 'Let us keep the pretty child. We shall be doing a good action; and the quarrel will be put an end to.'

Monsieur Wahl smiled at this conciliatory proposal, and immediately said, in a loud voice, 'Go on, then, I will take charge of this child, and I will in future supply all his wants.' The captain was satisfied with the arrangement; and all who were on board

praised to the skies the charitable resolution of Monsieur Wahl.

Without any further hindrance, the vessel arrived at Vienna. Monsieur Wahl purchased a large and handsome house, and re-established himself in business. He caused his only daughter, Antonia, to receive a brilliant education, and he accorded to Augustus the favour of following her learning, and profiting by the lessons that she received. The little boy, however ignorant he might hitherto have been, showed so much intelligence, and made such rapid progress in his studies, that he excited the astonishment of his masters. Besides, he was so modest, so docile, so obliging, so loving, and so pious, that Monsieur and Madame Wahl began to love him as if he were their own child. The principles that his mother had inculcated, and the fear of God with which she had filled his heart, had extended their roots deeply, and gained strength day by day.

Monsieur Wahl saw with pleasure that Augustus showed great inclination and capacity for business. He procured him facilities for obtaining information in everything that relates to the business of a merchant; and,

after that novitiate, he took him with him into his counting-house.

Augustus soon took part, with great success, in all the operations of the concern; and before he had attained his twentieth year, he found himself in a position to conduct with honour the affairs of his adopted father. Monsieur Wahl extended his connections from day to day. He undertook to furnish extensive supplies to the army; and although he made no other than lawful profits, he amassed an immense sum. He saw how much he was indebted to the prudence, the industry, and the probity of his adopted son; and he felt that he ought to devise means to make him a worthy recompense. The little Antonia had grown up, and had become a handsome and graceful young lady. She was pure both in body and mind, and of perfect beauty. Monsieur Wahl gave her in marriage to Augustus.

After the war, the Emperor, wishing to recompense the zeal and services of Monsieur Wahl and his son, granted them titles of nobility, and permitted them to take the title of Lords of Walheim. The adopted parents of Augustus were not long able to enjoy their happiness.

They died soon afterwards, one after the other, but with the consolation of seeing their daughter thoroughly happy.

Augustus, having liquidated his affairs, resolved to purchase, in Bavaria or in Swabia, one of those magnificent castles that the war had caused to be abandoned, and that were then for sale at a low price. Many were shown to him, and after having made a journey to inspect them, he bought the handsome lordship of Neurkirch, which, from its extent, and from the beauty of the country, appeared to merit the preference. He immediately had the necessary repairs made, to make it habitable, and returned to fetch his wife and children to take up their abode there.

When Antonia arrived with her husband in the new country, and when she saw the extensive ravages that war had occasioned, she was filled with sorrow and commiseration. Great numbers of houses were in ruins, others were threatening to fall down, and extensive tracts of land were uncultivated and overgrown with weeds. 'Alas! poor people!' she exclaimed, with tears in her eyes; 'we must come to their assistance.'

Augustus rejoiced that his wife entertained

the same feelings with himself ; and he hastened to satisfy the most pressing wants of the unhappy inhabitants. He gave them wood to build with, and advanced them money. He had seed and beasts purchased, and distributed them to those who were most in need of resources. Before long, this generous nobleman saw his castle surrounded by new and handsome cottages, and his rich fields well cultivated, and in excellent condition.

The peasants could not find words to give a suitable expression to their gratitude ; and at length they proceeded in a body to the castle, to return thanks to Monsieur and Madame de Walheim. But Augustus said to them, ‘ God has raised me, from a poor little boy that I was, to be a rich and powerful man, and He has blessed me in all my undertakings. I should be ungrateful if I did not give others a share of these blessings. I rejoice that I am able to do something for your welfare ; for there is not a greater pleasure than that of making one’s fellow-creatures happy.’

CHAPTER III.

THE CHILD RESTORED.



WHILE Augustus de Walheim was, as we have seen, becoming a rich and powerful lord, his mother, the good Theodora, had passed through many troubles, and had led a life of great hardship, although she had always been sustained by her confidence in the goodness of God.

Soon after she had lost her little Augustus in the forest, the theatre of war was extended to that part of the Danube where she resided, and the country was invaded by strangers. Theodora abandoned her cottage, and withdrew to the village, to live with her brother, who possessed the paternal dwelling. But she was not able to reside there long. At the close of a battle the village was reduced to ashes, and was abandoned by the greater part of the inhabitants. The house of Theodora was not spared; and her brother, whom this disaster had ruined, was obliged to take a situation as a journeyman fisherman.

As for herself, she went to live with her

sister, who resided about fifteen leagues off, and who received her with the utmost affection. Theodora assisted her in bringing up her numerous family ; and the two sisters lived together in the most perfect union, mutually solacing each other in the difficulties and privations that the war had brought upon them. Many years afterwards, they received from the country a letter from their brother, who told them that his wife was dead, and, as his two daughters had been married to foreigners during the war, he entreated Theodora to go back to him, to manage his household. She hastened to return thither.

As soon as she arrived at the village, she proceeded to the forest, that she might again see the beech-tree where she had last seen her poor boy asleep ; but she found everything changed and overthrown. The road that led to her cottage was no longer traceable, so much was it covered with high grass and thick bushes. On the spot where formerly nothing but branches grew, there were now large trees, with widely extended brambles ; and, on the contrary, large trees that Theodora had been accustomed to see there, had completely disappeared. There had not remained for a long

time the least trace of her poor wooden cabin, and she could not even find the place where it had been situated. All around was at present thickly grown with young trees.

Theodora fatigued herself a long time in searching for the beech-tree under which she had so often wept. She found her way through the thorns and thick underwood, and she examined, for a long time, the beech-trees which she met with. 'When shall I find the tree?' thought she.

'Do not give yourself so much trouble, good mother,' said an old man, who was gathering dry sticks in the wood. 'That tree has not been in existence for this long time. The same change that struck you on your return to the village, has taken place in the woods. The men that were children when we left it, have grown up. Those who were young are now old, and the old men are no more in this world. The young timber has replaced the old trees. Everything in this world passes rapidly away, men even more quickly than trees. We have not any durable place here below; and we must aspire to reach, as soon as possible, that which is destined for us above.' After these words, the venerable old man de-

parted, and Theodora lost all hope of finding her tree again.

Monsieur de Walheim resided many leagues from the spot ; but the forest, and also the village where Theodora lived, formed part of the vast domains that he had purchased. One day he proceeded to the wood, in order that he might distribute to the villagers their supply of wood for the winter. The forest was in a very disorderly state. None of the timber had been felled for a long time, and there were a great many full-grown trees. Augustus, therefore, wished to superintend the distribution himself, that it might not be cut down ignorantly or uneconomically. He wished, also, to see for himself that every inhabitant received his just share. He had all the fathers of families called together, and he gave them, sometimes one tree, sometimes another.

Theodora had come for her brother ; and it happened that, in the order of distribution, it had fallen to his lot to have the tree before which she found Monsieur de Walheim. She approached, and entreated his lordship to pardon her brother for not having come himself. He was ill, and was not able to leave his bed. Monsieur de Walheim little thought

that the poor ill-clad woman was his mother ; and she had not the slightest idea that the rich lord who stood before her, in the splendour of youth and beauty, clothed in a brown coat of fine cloth, and having his fingers covered with diamonds, was the son that she had so often wept for. He felt at once, without knowing her, great commiseration for the woman, and he ordered that the tree should be cut down for her.

The forest-keeper objected to it. 'It is a great loss to cut down this beech-tree,' he said. 'The aspen and the birch are excellent for the poor people. The beech-tree ought to be kept for the manor and its officers.'

Monsieur de Walheim cast a severe look on him, and said, 'We ought not to give to the poor that only which we despise ; but we ought, when they have need of them, to share with them the riches that we enjoy. This tree belongs to the sister of the sick man, and I desire, besides, that it may be cleft at my expense. Let the wood be corded, and taken to his sister's door. Put your hand to the work immediately, and let the wood be prepared before my own.'

He immediately went away, that he might

spare her thanks ; and she, looking after him, with tears in her eyes, said, ‘ God bless the good lord !’ He, however, continued his way.

Thus the mother and son, who had seen each other for the last time in the wood twenty-six years before, had met again ; and they would have been separated for ever, if God had not taken care to make all his providence shine out on that occasion.

The wood-cutters immediately applied their hatchets to the tree, which fell to the earth with a great crash ; and at that moment the two men suddenly exclaimed, ‘ A miracle ! a miracle !’ The trunk, in falling, had been broken at the lower part, where it was most fragile ; a portion of the bark had been detached, and a picture which Theodora had placed in the tree many years as a memorial of her son, and for which she had long sought in vain, was discovered. The colours of the little picture were still fresh and well-preserved. The gilt frame shone in the sun, as if the picture had been surrounded by its brilliant rays.

The wood-cutters were young men, who knew nothing of the former history of the picture. ‘ The manner in which that picture

came into this tree surpasses all our understanding,' said they, the one to the other.

'One could see no opening in the tree outside. It was entirely surrounded with bark, and was covered over with moss, like all the other old trees in the forest. It is an unheard-of, extraordinary, inconceivable affair. It is a miracle.'

On hearing the noisy exclamations of these men, Monsieur de Walheim came up. He had been scarcely two hundred paces off, and was still employed in superintending the distribution of the trees. He took the picture in his hands, and examined it attentively. 'It is indeed very beautiful,' he said.

All at once, however, Monsieur de Walheim changed colour, and his hand in which he held the picture began to tremble violently. 'Oh, yes!' he exclaimed, 'it is wonderful!' He was obliged to seat himself on the trunk of the fallen tree, that he might not fall, so great was his emotion. He had turned the frame of the picture, and on the back of it he had read these words :

'In the sixteen hundred and thirty-second year from the birth of Christ, on the tenth of October, I saw, for the last time, under this

tree, my only son Augustus, aged five years and three months. May God be with him, and accompany him everywhere; and may that Divine Master, as He consoled Mary at the foot of the cross, vouchsafe also to grant some consolation to me, Theodora Sommer, like Mary, a desolate mother.'

Like a flash of lightning, a thought crossed the mind of Monsieur de Walheim. 'That lost child,' he said, 'is myself. The name, the year, and the day, are proofs enough that it was my mother who placed there this picture.'

While he was examining the picture, Theodora ran up to him. She had just learned, from a neighbour who had come back with her, the news of the finding of the picture,—news that had immediately spread throughout the forest, and that had excited general surprise. 'My Lord!' she exclaimed; 'that picture belongs to me. I entreat you to restore it to me. My name, you see, is written upon it. Our good clergyman wrote it there at my request, and it was also at my request that he added the other words. Alas!' she continued, weeping, and looking down upon the fallen tree, 'see there the beech-tree under

which Augustus was sleeping, in so gentle and peaceable a slumber, before he was taken away from me for ever! How many times, since my return, have I passed before that tree without recognising it! O my Augustus! I now see once more the place where my eyes saw you for the last time. Alas! I shall never see you any more. I am only able to sigh before your tomb!

Her tears hindered her from saying any more. Monsieur Walheim, who had already learned his own name from the picture that he held in his hands, was almost beside himself on ascertaining that that poor woman was his mother. His heart bounded, and he would have thrown himself into her arms, exclaiming, 'My mother!' but he restrained himself; for the thought crossed his mind, that a joy so great and so sudden might be a deathblow to her. He took her hand in a friendly manner, and wiped away her tears with his white handkerchief. He proffered her some consolation, and by degrees told her that her son was still living, that he knew him, and that she would soon see him. After all these precautions, and when he saw that she was sufficiently prepared, he said, 'It is myself that am your

lost child !' The mother sprang into his arms, uttering the only cry, 'Thou !' The shock prevented her from saying another word.

They held each other in their embraces for a long time, and in silence. The affecting scene drew tears from all who were present.

'Dear mother !' said Monsieur de Walheim at length, 'God has granted the wish that you formed for me, and that you inscribed upon this picture. He has accompanied me everywhere, and has blessed me in everything. He has also granted the wish you uttered for yourself. He has consoled you as He consoled Mary. He has restored to you your son, and has caused you to see him still living here below. It was under this tree that we were separated, and it is at the same place that He has brought us together again. He has certainly preserved this picture, in order that it might become the means of our recognition and our reunion. He has shown us that all that He does is always for the best.'







